

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T127A/79T



State House  
Lusaka, Republic of Zambia

Rec'd & answered by  
for telegrams

Am

25th October, 1979.

My dear Margaret,

I thank you for sending your Parliamentary Under Secretary in the Commonwealth and Foreign Office, Mr. Richard Luce, to share with us your ideas on the next stage in the negotiations at Lancaster House. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in this.

We were naturally happy that following assurances by the British Government and that of the United States on the vital question of land, common ground was found which enabled the Patriotic Front to continue with the talks. This is a further and continuing sign of the willingness on all sides to find a permanent solution to the problem at hand.

Mr. Luce will have reported to you on our discussions but I thought I should confirm in writing some of the points which formed part of our conversation.

ELECTIONS:

I fully appreciate and share your concern for impartial, fair and free elections before Zimbabwe could be brought to legal independence. I believe, however, that the time you propose for conducting such elections is rather too short to achieve the objectives which we all desire. As you know, there are hundreds of thousands of refugees now living outside Zimbabwe and who will need to return home to participate in the elections. Needless to say that the organisation for the return of these refugees would take time. The Patriotic Front itself would in all fairness, need time to organise themselves properly.

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Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,  
10 Downing Street,  
LONDON.



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They have been outside and their political machinery has not been allowed to operate inside Zimbabwe by the present regime. A reasonable period in which all the parties can campaign is, therefore, necessary. Arising out of our own experience here in Zambia, we know that the awakening of the consciousness of the people and their preparation for impending political changes are a necessary pre-requisite of the process of fostering unity and reconciliation in a new and emerging country.

The other major factor in the conduct of elections in my view is the registration of voters. I noted from the report which Mr. Luce gave to me verbally that you do not intend to proceed with this normal process before elections are held in Zimbabwe. In my view, the registration of voters is an exercise that can be accomplished in a much shorter period of say three months. You will note that not only do we need to assure our Commonwealth friends but the entire international community want to be satisfied that the elections are being conducted in a fair and demonstrably democratic manner. To exclude registration and those aspects that go with it would be to run the risk of the elections not being seen as fair, free and impartial by all concerned. It is my belief, therefore, that you should give serious attention to this important pillar of any democratic process.

I believe frankly that these processes which are vital to the need to foster unity and reconciliation among the people of Zimbabwe are absolutely necessary if we are to arrive at the objective of finding a peaceful and permanent solution to the conflict. It is in this context that I believe that a period of six months in which to complete the work is adequate.

#### THE CEASEFIRE AND ITS SUPERVISION:

In my discussions with Mr. Luce, he informed me that it was the intention of the British Government to establish a Military Commission of both sides to discuss the matters relating to the ceasefire. I proposed that such a joint commission needed to meet almost immediately if possible simultaneously with the political discussions. I said this would be important in terms of diffusing tension among the parties. I must admit Mr. Luce was not very specific on this matter and I accept that you had probably not developed your ideas much further than this or at least you had not by that time reached a stage when you would feel free to inform us about your detailed proposals. However, I got the impression which is now confirmed by your own proposals tabled on Monday that you anticipate an agreement between the opposing armies and subsequent disengagement of forces.

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The idea of a ceasefire that can hold is central to the resolution of the conflict. During our discussions in Lusaka, it was quite clear, as you will agree, that the idea for the presence of an international force was very much preferable. You had explained to your Commonwealth colleagues the problems which you would have if such terminology were to appear in the final communique. However, the time for a decision on just how the ceasefire is to be supervised and policed has now come. An international presence in one form or the other to oversee the observance of the ceasefire is absolutely necessary if we are to achieve the desired results. I have no doubt in my own mind that the financing of the exercise is not an insurmountable problem. The United States and selected European powers would, in fact, be more than willing to make their contribution in this respect. Mark Chona who has been acting on my instructions, has discussed my anxieties on this matter with you already. I hope and trust that your Government will continue to approach this issue with the seriousness and importance that it deserves.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my sustained interest in adhering strictly to the principles that guided us during the Lusaka Conference. At no other time have we got so close to a solution of the conflict. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity as the consequences for security and peace in the area are grave. It is for this reason, Margaret, that I firmly believe that you should revive your present ideas about the arrangements which you now propose for the Transitional Period.

I remain available for further consultations in these matters.

*As always,*

*Kaunda*

Kenneth D. Kaunda  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA